

ENERGY.GOV

Energy.gov Offices

National Labs

Search Energy.gov



NATIONAL NUCLEAR
SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION

About
Us

Careers

MISSIONS

LEADERSHIP
AND
OFFICES

NEWS
&
LIBRARY

National Nuclear Security Administration

United States Collaborates with Switzerland to Remove Last Remaining Separated Plutonium

MARCH 3, 2016



[Home](#) » United States Collaborates with Switzerland to Remove Last Remaining Separated Plutonium

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), working in collaboration with the Government of Switzerland, announced that approximately 20 kilograms of separated plutonium have been transported from Switzerland to the United States. The successful transport of this plutonium was completed through a multilateral effort that included NNSA’s Office of Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation (DNN), Switzerland’s Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), and the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE).

With this removal, Switzerland is now free of all separated plutonium.

“We applaud Switzerland’s role as a global leader in nonproliferation,” said NNSA Deputy Administrator Anne Harrington. “Through this cooperative effort Switzerland has eliminated all the separated plutonium from its country, which supports international goals of consolidating and minimizing inventories of nuclear material. These efforts are an example of the important nonproliferation mission of NNSA and an accomplishment for risk reduction that will be highlighted at the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C. later this month.”

The plutonium, which originally was intended for research and development of new-generation fuel elements for nuclear reactor plants, belonged to the Swiss Confederation. It had been securely stored for several decades under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards at the Paul Scherrer Institute, Switzerland’s largest research institute for natural and engineering sciences. In order to execute the plutonium removal project, the U.S. and Swiss teams overcame several technical challenges, including the design, construction, and qualification of new gloveboxes for plutonium packaging; the development of processes for stabilization and characterization of materials for safe transport; training and certification of personnel for specialized packaging operations; and validation of packages for the plutonium transport.

Significant contributions were made by Switzerland’s Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI), which approved the necessary licenses to ensure safe and secure packaging and shipment of the material, the United Kingdom’s International Nuclear Services, which provided the secure transport of the material from Europe to

the United States, and the IAEA. This material will be stored at a secure facility in the United States pending final disposition.

####

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear explosive testing; works to reduce the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad. Visit www.nnsa.energy.gov for more information.

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	RESOURCES	ENERGY.GOV RESOURCES	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
1000 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20585 Phone: 202- 586-5000 Media Inquiries: 202- 586-7371 <div><div><div>f</div><div>Twitter</div></div><div><div>YouTube</div><div>in</div></div><div><div>Comments</div></div></div> A semi- autonomous agency of	Budget Directives FOIA Locations NEPA Office of Civil Rights Contact Us	Budget & Performance Directives, Delegations & Requirements FOIA Inspector General Privacy Program Small Business Staff & Contractor Resources	The White House USA.gov